

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
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October 21, 2013

The Honorable Fred Upton  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Power  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield:

We commend you for holding the Committee's first hearing on climate change on September 18, 2013, with Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy. That hearing, however, should be the start – not the end – of Committee efforts to address the most serious energy challenge facing our nation.

Good legislation needs to start with an understanding of the problem. That is why we said at the September 18 hearing that the Committee should hear from the world's best scientists so we can be informed about the risks of climate change. The best place to start is with consideration of the most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The IPCC is the leading international scientific body for the assessment of climate change. More than 830 authors and review editors from 85 countries are contributing to IPCC's Fifth Assessment Report, the first volume of which was released on September 27, 2013. This first volume alone cites more than 9,200 scientific publications, the majority of which were published in the last six years.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Human influence on climate clear, IPCC report says* (Sept. 27, 2013) (press release).

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Page 2

The new IPCC report concludes that warming of the climate system is “unequivocal” and that the observed changes since the 1950s are “unprecedented over decades to millennia.”<sup>2</sup> According to the IPCC, the evidence showing that humans are the primary driver of this warming has grown since the last IPCC report in 2007. IPCC scientists now state with 95% confidence that “human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.”<sup>3</sup> This is the same level of confidence that scientists have about smoking causing cancer.

For the first time, the IPCC also established a climate budget the planet needs to follow in order to limit warming to 2°C (3.6°F), the level beyond which the impacts of climate change could be irreversible and catastrophic. To ensure that we have just a 66% chance of limiting warming to this level, IPCC scientists concluded that we need to limit cumulative man-made carbon dioxide emissions to 1,000 gigatons, at most. We have already expended half of that budget, emitting 531 gigatons of carbon through 2011.<sup>4</sup> We may exhaust this remaining budget within three decades if we do not immediately change course.<sup>5</sup>

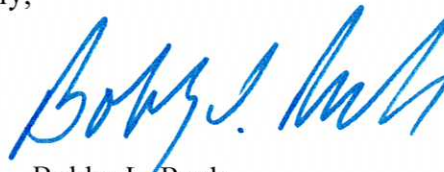
We are the Committee charged with crafting a responsible energy policy for the nation. As we carry out this responsibility, it would be reckless and irresponsible for the Committee to continue to deny the climate science or to ignore the warnings of the world’s best climate scientists.

We urge you to schedule a hearing with the IPCC as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and  
Power

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<sup>2</sup> Working Group I Contribution to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers* at 3 (Sept. 27, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 20.

<sup>5</sup> World Resources Institute, *World’s Carbon Budget to Be Spent in Three Decades* (Sept. 27, 2013) (online at <http://insights.wri.org/news/2013/09/world%E2%80%99s-carbon-budget-be-spent-three-decades>); see also Professor Myles Allen, Oxford University, as cited in *U.N. Climate Panel Endorses Ceiling on Global Emissions*, New York Times (Sept. 27, 2013).